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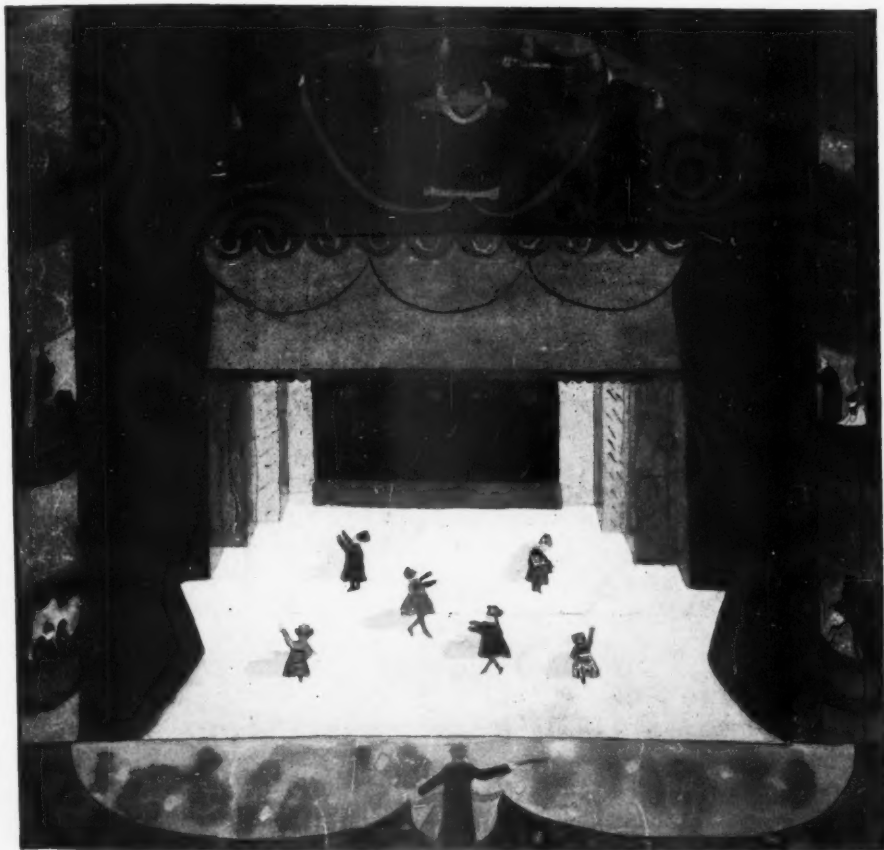
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MONTHLY

DRAMA

New Series

JULY-AUGUST M'CM'XXII

Number 20



A CHILD'S CONCEPTION OF A
RUSSIAN BALLET. BY PHYLLIS
HANCOX, AGED FOURTEEN

Issued by the BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE, a Federation of Societies and other Organizations working for the Development of the Drama. Individual Membership is also open to all who are concerned with the practice or enjoyment of the Art of the Theatre, and may be acquired by payment of the Annual Subscription of £1 1s., entitling the Member to all privileges of the League, including the free receipt of the League's Monthly Magazine. Full particulars from the Hon. Sec.,
10 KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON, W.C.

King Lear at Hordle

By

BERNARD GILBERT

Author of "OLD ENGLAND"

7/6 net

The rural plays of Bernard Gilbert will be a great boon to those interested in providing recreation for villages. Mr. Gilbert, who lived for thirty years in the country, produced these plays in his native village with astonishing success. They are written in the simplest language around every-day incidents of village life. The blacksmith, the miller, the grocer, the carrier and the ploughman, and their families are shown, and the parts can be taken by the people themselves in every case. The Plays and Duologues are written with profound insight, and the peasants are able to act them without experience or coaching, because they find themselves saying and doing exactly what they *would* say and do under the given circumstances.

CONTENTS

KING LEAR AT HORDLE	2 males, 2 females.	Time—1½ hours.
ELDORADO	2 do. 2 do.	Time—½ hour.
GONE FOR GOOD.	1 do. 2 do.	Time—½ hour.
THE HORDLE POACHER.	2 do. 1 female.	Time—½ hour.
THE OLD BULL... ..	4 do. 1 do.	Time—40 minutes.
TO ARMS!	5 do. 1 do.	Time—½ hour.

A PROSPECTUS WILL BE SENT ON REQUEST

COLLINS, 48 PALL MALL, LONDON

THE ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

MR. W. LEE MATHEWS was in the chair and over one hundred members were present at the Third Annual Meeting of the British Drama League, held at the Lecture Theatre, Victoria and Albert Museum, on Thursday afternoon, June 29th.

The notice convening the meeting was read by the hon. secretary. The minutes of the last meeting, which had been circularised, were taken as read and signed.

Annual Report.

In submitting the annual report to the meeting, the Chairman stated that he would like to point out that the amount of work accomplished during the year with the excessively small amount of money was extremely gratifying, and it was an indication of what might be done in the future if the necessary support was forthcoming. The Chairman then called on the Hon. Secretary to give a short resumé on the report.

Mr. Whitworth outlined the chief points in the report. With regard to the publication of plays in connection with the Shakespeare Head Press, he said that arrangements had been satisfactorily concluded, and the plays selected would be published in the autumn at the specially reduced price to members of the League and members of affiliated societies at 2s. 6d. each, and to the general public at 3s. 6d. He stated that it was much hoped that members would support the scheme.

Balance Sheet.

Mr. H. M. Paull proposed, and Miss Gwen John seconded, that the Council should be asked to arrange for the accounts to be audited by a chartered accountant for the year 1922-1923. This was carried unanimously.

The Chairman then moved, and Miss Edith Craig seconded, that the report and balance sheet should be adopted. This was carried unanimously.

Election of Officers.

It was proposed by Mr. Bernard Shaw, seconded by Mr. Kenneth R. Barnes, and resolved, that the present officers should be re-elected.

Mr. Lee Mathews stated that he wished to take this opportunity of moving a vote

of thanks to Mr. Whitworth for the large amount of work done during the year, and also to Miss Briggs.

Miss Craig proposed that a vote of thanks should also be passed to Mrs. Whitworth for her work in connection with the ball, and also for her kindness in continuing to undertake the accounts during the year. This was carried unanimously. Mr. Whitworth, in replying, said that the work could not have been accomplished had it not been for the co-operation of the Council and committees, and he wished to move a vote of thanks to those members who had given such valuable help during the year. Mr. Lee Mathews replied on behalf of the Council and other committees.

Vacancies on Council.

The Hon. Secretary reported that there were three vacancies on the Council, and four new members had been nominated, these being:—

The Master of the Temple, proposed by Miss Edith Craig, seconded by Miss Elsie Fogerty.

Lord Stuart of Wortley, proposed by Mr. H. Granville-Barker, seconded by Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth.

Mr. Walter Payne, proposed by Mr. Charles Tennyson, seconded by Mr. W. J. Turner. Miss Maude Scott, proposed by Miss Edith Neville, seconded by Miss F. F. Ketcher.

Voting papers were handed to those present, the result being that the Master of the Temple, Lord Stuart of Wortley, and Mr. Walter Payne were elected.

Drama League Emblem for Use by Affiliated Societies.

Miss Alice Noble, on behalf of the North London Group, suggested that an emblem such as that which appears on the editorial page of DRAMA, should be used by societies affiliated to the League. A member of another group asked whether it was suggested that the use of the emblem should be compulsory, pointing out that some groups already have an emblem of their own. Miss Noble replied that the suggestion was that the use of the League's emblem should be entirely voluntary. The Chairman asked if the North London Group would be content to leave suggestions for

a design and arrangements for circulation in the hands of the Council; to which Miss Noble replied in the affirmative, adding that her group would be glad if steps were taken as soon as possible.

Joint Performances by Members of Groups.

Miss Noble, on behalf of the North London Group, suggested that a performance or series of performances should be organised by the League at a West-End theatre, the actors to be taken from various affiliated groups, all arrangements to be entirely left to the Council of the League. Miss Noble further suggested that if the Council thought fit a sub-committee, partly composed of members of two or three of the groups, might be asked to give suggestions as to the performance to the Council, the only stipulation being that no player should be a member of the professional stage.

No objection was made to this proposal, and the Council was asked to make what arrangements it could in the matter.

Harpenden Group.

A representative of the Harpenden Group stated that her group did not feel sufficiently in touch with headquarters; they felt that they were isolated, and also that DRAMA did not contain matter which was of sufficient help. Mr. Whitworth replied that if any member would give any concrete suggestions as to how the League could co-operate more closely with its affiliated societies he would be very glad to lay them before the Council, and if the groups would supply headquarters with brighter and more critical accounts of their activities, he would be very glad to print them in DRAMA.

Authors' Royalties.

The Hon. Secretary reported that, in reply to a suggestion made by him for a joint meeting between representatives of the Society of Authors and the League, he had received a letter stating that it would be impossible to arrange for such a committee at the present time, but that it might be possible to re-open the matter in the autumn.

Mr. Bernard Shaw stated that he considered the reason that societies did not obtain the terms they wanted lay in the fact that they would insist in describing themselves as "amateur." If they would only regard themselves as professionals

they would be treated as such and allowed terms on a professional basis. Mr. Shaw went on to say that he had had an article reprinted, in which he stated that any established society which devoted its profits to building up a capital fund, and aimed at the foundation of a permanent series of performances, could as a professional company at once obtain professional terms exactly as do the ordinary commercial speculators.

Miss Craig suggested that the League should do all in its power to encourage affiliated societies to give performances not for charity or frivolous social purposes, but on the sound business lines laid down by Mr. Bernard Shaw.

Miss Macnamara inquired if it would be possible, in accordance with the conditions laid down, for the proceeds to be given to the Drama League. The answer was in the affirmative.

Mr. Whitworth proposed a vote of thanks to Sir Cecil Harcourt-Smith for his kindness in lending the Lecture Theatre for the meeting.

The meeting then closed with a vote of thanks to the Chairman, proposed by Mr. Dingwall and carried unanimously.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Albert Rutherford gave a most interesting address on the International Theatre Exhibition. A lively debate resulted, to which Mr. Bernard Shaw, as Chairman, contributed.

In addition to the Summer Schools at Glastonbury and Stroud (particulars of which appear on other pages of this issue) there will be a Summer School of Speech Training and Drama organised by Miss Elsie Fogerty at Stratford-on-Avon from Friday, July 28th to Saturday, August 12th.

The Course will include Voice Training, Rehearsal Classes, Lectures on The Drama, Stage Management, Production, Playmaking, etc., Dramatic Study, Reading and Diction Classes, Study of Plays.

All information from the Registrar, Central School of Speech Training, Royal Albert Hall, London, S.W.7. Telephone: 5360 Kensington.

THE DALCROZE SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

When cities were smaller and less full of noise, when the minstrel sang in the hall at the Market Place, when the voice was the chief musical instrument, and song and dance were common to all, there was no need to teach music. Folk-song and dance died with the peasant arts and the teaching of music became as mechanical as the making of furniture. With these died in us the exercise of æsthetic activities which, says Mr. Clutton-Brock, "the spirit in us constantly desires to exercise and is thwarted and troubled if it cannot exercise them." M. Jaques-Dalcroze sees this poverty of spirit among us, he recognizes that these are the fundamental and universal arts which can be practised by the human being using his own body as material, subduing it till it becomes a fine instrument. He shows us how to bring back this common and universal understanding of music and dance by teaching the child to use and exercise his own senses for his own delight.

M. Jaques-Dalcroze says, "If it is desired that musical taste shall not remain the prerogative of a cultured few, but shall penetrate the real heart of the whole people, a genuine musical education—like the teaching of science and morals—should be provided at school." Also: "Ear-training alone will not make a child love and appreciate music; the most potent element in music, and the nearest related to life, is rhythmic movement."

All art, says Fenellosa, is harmonious spacing, and the end of art, says Croce, is the individual expression of the universal emotions of mankind.

The arts of music, dancing and poetry are related in two ways:—

(1) The human body provides in itself the means and stuff of the art, and

(2) These arts are practised in time. Music is a tone pattern in time. Poetry a word pattern in time. Dance a sculpture pattern in time and space. Combined we have three other arts:—

Music with Poetry—Song.

Music with Gesture—the Ballet.

Poetry with Gesture—the Drama.

And the three together—the Opera,

It is not generally recognized how important for education is that teaching which gives freedom to the body to create beauty in itself, and freedom of the senses to apprehend beauty in its surroundings. Perhaps it was by this means, and this alone, that the Greeks developed their sense of balance and rhythm in space which was the high watermark of western sculpture and architecture.

No art can achieve which does not impose upon its disciples the severest discipline, and the distinction of Dalcroze eurhythmics is that it does impose such discipline upon body and mind. With great diffidence I suggest that this discipline of the body, which enables it to become a sensitive and expressive instrument, must be of use to the actor. Dramatic gestures used on this stage are not those used in life. Amateur acting is convincing on this point. In good drama the gestures are symbolic, conventionalized, and, in the best actors, the gesture is subdued to a rhythmic beauty which bears perhaps the same relation to the pure pattern of the dance as good prose bears to verse.

Eurhythmics is not a compendium of all education. It is a wonderful introduction to the understanding and practice of the fundamental arts of music, dancing and gesture, and for that reason it appeals to those who desire for their children an education which shall not exclude the æsthetic activities.

M. L. E.

IBSEN'S PLAYS.

From time to time we have inquiries as to which of Ibsen's plays are in copyright for stage performances and which not. Mr. William Archer has kindly sent us the following list, which we feel should be made generally available.

NON-COPYRIGHT (can be played by any one).

The League of Youth.

Pillars of Society.

A Doll's House.

Ghosts.

An Enemy of the People.

The Wild Duck.

Rosmersholm.

The Lady from the Sea.

COPYRIGHT (permission must be obtained from Messrs. Heinemann).

Hedda Gabler.

The Master Builder.

Little Eyolf.

John Gabriel Borkman.

When We Dead Awaken.



THE JOURNAL OF
THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

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LORD HOWARD DE WALDEN.

Chairman of the Council:
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MSS. for publication in DRAMA will be considered if accompanied by stamps for return if unsuitable. All Enquiries should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, at the Offices of the League, 10, King Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C.2.

Telephone: GERRARD, 3157.

Neither the Editor nor the Drama League as a whole accepts any responsibility for the opinions expressed in signed articles printed in this Journal

THE third year of the Drama League ended, as reported on the first page of this issue, with the Annual Meeting, held appropriately enough in the Lecture Theatre of the Victoria and Albert Museum, where the International Theatre Exhibition is also drawing to a successful close. So great have been the crowds attending the Exhibition that it has been decided to keep it open until the end of this month.

The lectures, organised by the League, which have been given on six afternoons during the Exhibition, have been largely attended, and have in every case been followed with intense interest. Both the League and the audience are much indebted to the lecturers and chairmen who have so generously responded to the claims of the occasion. Our only regret has been that Sir Martin Harvey's health did not allow him to fulfil his engagement to lecture on "The Actor in the Theatre." Colonel Strange, however, kindly consented to fill the gap with a lecture on the Japanese Theatre, under the chairmanship of His Excellency the Japanese Ambassador.

Since our last number was issued the League has been greatly strengthened by the affiliation of the Actor's Association. From the beginning we have been in close co-operation with the Association owing to the fact that its President, Mr. J. Fisher White, has been an active member of our Executive Committee. This co-operation has now been formally ratified, and one more step taken towards the ultimate object of the League, which is to be the representative body of all branches of the art of the stage, or, in the words of Mr. Granville Barker, to be "the Parliament of the Theatre."

The Community Drama movement has suffered a severe loss by the death of Miss Francis Hope, of Citizen House, Bath, which occurred in June at Caldey Island where Miss Hope had gone for the Corpus Christi Play acted by the monks of Caldey. Miss Hope, together with her friend and colleague, Miss Consuelo de Reyes, created Citizen House, and raised it in a few short years to a unique position among the Community theatres of the country. Miss Hope was no less concerned with social work of all kinds in Bath. Her energy and public spirit seemed inexhaustible, and her many activities were rendered gracious and fruitful by reason of the very human impulse which one felt behind them all. She leaves a bright example to all, and many friends in the Drama League will not forget the happy moments which they owed to her untiring hospitality.

We are glad to announce that Lord Crawford has consented to become a Vice-President of the Drama League. In recognition of the notable service rendered to dramatic art by his promotion of the International Theatre Exhibition, Sir Cecil Harcourt Smith has also been elected an Honorary Member of the League.

According to our custom DRAMA will not be published during August. The next number will be issued in mid-September. The office will be closed, except for important correspondence, during August.

A BOOK OF VILLAGE PLAYS

Reviewed by Charles McEvoy

KING LEAR AT HORDLE, and Other Rural Plays. By Bernard Gilbert. Collins. 7s. 6d. net.

Mr. Bernard Gilbert is setting out to do for the English Community Drama what Synge did for the drama of the Irish soil. This volume of plays provides exactly what the movement for community theatres most needs—living and essentiallyactable plays of the soil. It is a publication that should give actual impetus to an important branch of the British Drama League's activities.

Mr. Gilbert commences this new work with a preface on Rural Art, in which he has many direct things to say about village life, but when he writes of his own share in stimulating a rural drama by writing plays for it we think he is too modest. And in extending this same modesty to his players we think he is equally at fault. Neither play writing nor play acting for a living theatre of the soil is quite the simple matter that he would appear to have us believe.

"At last in despair," he says, "I sat down to try to write something that would give me satisfaction to produce. My first attempt was built on the old story of the father who leaves his belongings to his quarrelsome sons, arranging that one of them should divide everything into two heaps, and the other should have the first pick. It was quite easy, as I was using characters that I knew by heart. There was no difficulty either about the production, because the blacksmith, the cobbler, the carpenter's daughter, etc., all acted their own parts, wherein they had nothing to do but behave and speak exactly as they would under the given circumstances."

This is what Mr. Gilbert tells us, but in point of fact these very plays are a flat contradiction of his own theory, and so, too, must be their representation by living men and women. It would be a pity if those directing the destinies of any community theatre, however small, accepted the same view, for it would leave little motive with most people for carrying on at all. To know characters "by heart" and to be able to translate such knowledge into the subtle language of the theatre is the gift of few, and this truth applies also—

though it is usually the intelligence of the producer which applies it—to the interpretation of such characters by a company of players. Once the carpenter's daughter has been got to believe that it is really herself who is speaking she may speak exactly as she would in real life. But if it was quite a different girl from herself she would still do the same thing if the written words were true of somebody and the part was within the range of her experience of life. Reality, as Mr. Gilbert would appear to mean it, does not really exist on the stage at all. The stage is essentially mendacious and unreal—except when the theatre has been let for a public meeting.

This is not to quarrel at all with Mr. Gilbert, but to thank him for a piece of work which is too good to be thus dismissed as "easy." He has to the full a sense of the theatre, and if this inspires reality in the performance that is the very achievement of which he should be most proud. Art alone can convey such an illusion, and the community drama calls for just as much art in its plays and its players as does the most ambitious theatre in the land.

In a short review these six plays (five of one act each and the "Lear" affair of three) can be best recommended to all interested in the community drama movement as being curiously living pictures of rural life that certainly should be safe to produce, because every line of them is of the kind that infallibly gets over the footlights. A deeply intimate knowledge of the English yeoman and peasant is manifest in all this author writes, and he shares, too, something of Synge's genius for discovering what is poetical in the language and idioms of the soil.

"King Lear at Hordle" is perhaps the best play in the book, as well as the longest. A simple interpretation in fresh terms of Shakespeare's story, Mr. Gilbert gives himself time to work it out, and this is probably why it is so entirely successful. In itself it has not much more in it than the stories he has taken for the plays of one act. If there is a measure of failure in two of these, "The Hordle Poacher" and "The Old Bull,"

we think it is because in each the story too much forces the language of the characters in order to get itself told in the given time. Mr. Gilbert is at his best when he goes on in a leisurely way, sure of his "laughs" and of the sympathy of his audience. Two other one-act plays are, however, excellent—"Eldorado" and "Gone for Good," both amazingly human episodes, as well as what is sometimes not very politely called "actor proof." "To Arms" seems just a little out of date, but it would have made a wonderful recruiting play, as perhaps it did.

Mr. Gilbert points out in his preface that the sex impulse is practically absent in his

plays, but it is better so than that it should be mishandled in a work so delicately true. The sex impulse in rural life is not to be dealt with in terms of realism, but the truthfulness of these pictures remains the more exact because the characters have other business on hand. Anyway, it is not in the least missed. It should be added that all these plays are available from the publisher (at 48, Pall Mall, London), in separate acting editions—"King Lear" at 1s. and the others at 6d. each—while the acting rights at a set fee may also be arranged direct with them, a plan that is most excellent.

NEWS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH

THE Glastonbury Summer School and Festival of Greek Drama will be held from July 29th to August 12th. Lecturers, Professor Gilbert Murray, R. W. Livingstone, (Fellow of Corpus College, Oxford), and the Rev. C. E. Seamer, M.A.; direction of dance, Penelope Spencer (leading dancer of the National British Opera); direction of stage production and music, Rutland Boughton.

A school of dance and music-drama will also be held from August 14th to 25th. Lecturers, Professor Gilbert Norwood, F. W. Cornford (Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge), Rutland Boughton, and probably G. Bernard Shaw (date and subject of Mr. Shaw's lecture to be announced later); direction of dance, Penelope Spencer (leading dancer of the National British Opera); direction of stage production and music, Rutland Boughton. Monday, August 14th, at 6, Rutland Boughton's lecture on Mozart; Wednesday, August 16th, at 7.30, F. W. Cornford's lecture; Wednesday, August 23rd, at 7.30, Professor Gilbert Norwood's lecture. The reduced inclusive fee for the month, from July 29th to August 25th, is five guineas.

The following is the list of public lectures and festival performances:—

At the Victoria Rooms, Benedict Street, Glastonbury.—Wednesday, August 2nd, at 7.30, lecture by Professor Gilbert Murray on "The Religious Basis of Greek Drama"; Wednesday, August 9th, at 7.30, lecture by

Mr. R. W. Livingstone on "The Genius of Sophocles as evidenced in *Œdipus the King*"; Saturday, August 12th, at 2.30 and 7.30, two performances of a Greek play (English translation), to be announced later; Wednesday, August 16th, at 7.30, lecture by Mr. F. W. Cornford on "The Psychology of Greek Tragedy and Comedy"; Wednesday, August 23rd, at 7.30, lecture by Professor Gilbert Norwood on "Ancient and Modern Methods of Playmaking."

At the Assembly Rooms, High Street, Glastonbury.—Saturday, August 26th, at 7.30, the first production of Rutland Boughton's setting of the "*Alcestis*" as a music-drama, the libretto being adapted from the translation of Gilbert Murray; Monday, August 28th, at 7.30, "*Alcestis*"; Tuesday, August 29th, at 2.30, "*Alcestis*"; Tuesday, August 29th, at 7.30, "*Venus and Adonis*," a mask by John Blow (1648-1708), preceded by a ballet to chamber music by Mozart; Wednesday, August 30th, at 2.30, "*Venus and Adonis*"; Wednesday, August 30th, at 7.30, "*Alcestis*"; Thursday, August 31st, at 2.30, "*Alcestis*"; Thursday, August 31st, at 7.30, concert with dances, the vocal items including Bantock's *Sappho Songs* and other modern settings of translations from the Greek; Friday, September 1st, at 7.30, "*Venus and Adonis*"; Saturday, September 2nd, at 2.30, "*Alcestis*". Principal singers: Astra Desmond, Arthur Jordan, Joseph Eastman, Clive

Carey, Gretta Don, Steuart Wilson, Frederick Woodhouse. Tickets for the stage performances from Goodall's Library, Glastonbury. Particulars of hotels, lodgings, etc., from Miss L. Allen, Norbins Road, Glastonbury.

STRATFORD.

The Annual Shakespeare Summer Festival at Stratford-on-Avon will start on July 24th, and continue until September 2nd. The performances will again be given by the New Shakespeare Company, under the direction of Mr. W. Bridges-Adams. The company recently paid a successful visit to Norway, in response to an invitation to present four Shakespearian plays in the National Theatre, Christiania, at which performances the King and Queen of Norway were present.

The plays for the Summer Festival will include: "Much Ado About Nothing," "Twelfth Night," "The Taming of the Shrew," "Othello" and "All's Well that Ends Well," which proved so popular at the Birthday Festival. To these will be added "Hamlet," with Mr. William Stack in the name part; "Cymbeline," with Mr. Baliol Holloway as Iachimo and Miss Ethel Carrington as Imogen; and "The Rivals," with Miss Dorothy Green as Lydia Languish.

In addition to the plays by the New Shakespeare Company, other attractions during the Festival will be a harpischord recital of early English music by Miss Violet Gordon Woodhouse, two matinées of dances, *ballets* and mime plays by Miss Ruby Ginner and Miss Irene Mawer, and three performances by the Birmingham Repertory Theatre Company of Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest," Mr. Bernard Shaw's "Getting Married," and Mr. Harold Chapin's "The New Morality." These additional attractions will be given on Thursday afternoon of each week.

EPPING.

Lady Darwin's "Princess Royal" was acted at Epping by a small company of local amateurs, supported by a number of Girl Guides, on Wednesday, July 5th. The intention had been to give the piece as an item of a Garden Fête, but the weather

forced the transfer of the whole afternoon's programme, including the play, to a local hall; and in such circumstances, on a strange stage and in restricted space, it was obviously impossible to present the play in the manner designed by the producers or intended by the authoress. The little piece is of the slightest character, so far as the plot or the speaking parts are concerned; it is really little more than a linking together of a series of children's dances and songs with a thread of narrative; and from this point of view it is certainly a much more attractive and interesting performance than would be the production of dance after dance in independent succession. There is opportunity for the single danseuse, as well as for dancing in companies by young girls. At Epping, the dancing of Miss Edith Horn was quite excellent; while the performance of the Girl Guides, in the various forms of Country Dance, kept the note of life and gaiety in the play from beginning to end. This dancing is not, however, "dragged in" for that purpose; it is an integral part of the dancing by the village girls in consequence of the local "lord's" announcement that he will wed the girl whom he once saw dancing in the forest. The winner of the prize is a gipsy girl (Miss Horn), who, with her gipsy grandmother (Mrs. Olivier), are the central characters. The other chief parts, Lord Cullen, his mother, and Lady Millicent, together with the two leaders of the village girls, have not to burden their memories with many lines; and the play is within the capacity of almost any village. Of course, it requires conscientious work and spirited acting, and it had the advantage of both these things at Epping, so that it was received with very great enthusiasm by both an afternoon and an evening audience; and proof was certainly given that the play is very well worth attempting by all who are in doubt about a good thing to select as a short pastoral play for a summer afternoon's entertainment.

PAGEANT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

On Saturday, June 17th, a notable addition was made to the successful dramatic work being produced in England, at pre-

sent, on Community lines. This took the form of a Masque, "The Pageant of English Literature," beautifully rendered by well over a hundred performers at Beechcroft Settlement, Birkenhead. The sloping lawns of the fine old house formed a natural auditorium, at the foot of which the main action took place, with a secondary wooden stage at the rear for interpolated extracts or special tableaux.

The Masque itself was divided into seven sections, with titles as follows: "The Birth of the Language," "The Spacious Days of Great Elizabeth," "Cavaliers and Roundheads," "Powder and Pukes," "Poetry and Revolt," "The People in Bondage," and "The Flower of the Ages." Each section had its chronicler, whose character and garb crystallised the main feature of the age represented, and who recited in easy-flowing, blank verse, the broad outlines of the story. No spectator could fail to mark the joy and enthusiasm of each performer, however small his part might be, and to this was mainly due the wonderful success of players in "getting across" every detail of the work. The audience followed eagerly, and their pleasure was deeply, if quietly, evident, in finding the old familiar gems of our national literature glowing again, as Englishmen first knew them, centuries ago, each in its appropriate setting. Whether Caedmon sang "The Beginning of Created Things" to a fine Georgian chant, or Herrick sang in a clear tenor "Gather ye Rosebuds;" whether Katharine and Petruchio, or Christian and Appollyon waged once more their immortal fights; whether Shelley's "Prometheus" thrilled us, or "The Cry of the Children" made us blush—there was no doubt that each point went home.

The general plan of the Masque emanated from the Hon. Warden of Beechcroft (Mr. Horace Fleming) and his staff. The book was written by Mr. J. W. Parkes, of Hereford College, Oxford, and the production was in the hands of Miss Eva Fowler, Dramatic Adviser of the Settlement.

HUDDERSFIELD.

At the Theatre Royal, Huddersfield, Mr. Alfred Wareing held a most successful Shakespeare Festival from June 12th to

July 1st. The plays, produced by Mr. Alexander March, were: "Twelfth Night," "Winter's Tale," "Merchant of Venice," "As You Like It," "Tempest," "Julius Caesar," "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Henry V." Nine special school matinées commencing at 4 p.m. were a successful part of the season. These allowed children to receive their attendance mark at school and march to the theatre, or if the distance was too great, to be taken in motor-buses to see the plays they were studying in school. About twelve thousand children visited the theatre to witness Shakespeare plays. An outstanding feature was the dancing in the "Tempest" and the "A Midsummer Night's Dream" by Huddersfield children. Miss Susie Lee arranged the dances and trained the children. Titania, First Fairy, Pease Blossom, Cobweb, Moth and Mustard Seed had special coaching by Miss Lee for their several parts. These lessons had to be given at 7.30 a.m. The children's keenness and delight in their work, whether singing, dancing or acting, made the hard work an absolute joy. Miss Lee was fortunate in being able to have the same children for the Festival as she had when she first visited Huddersfield to coach them for the Cinderella pantomime.

MERSTHAM.

A performance of "Twelfth Night" was given recently by the Merstham Women's Institute in the grounds of Merstham Lodge. The production was in the hands of Miss Lalli, and the result was a remarkable instance of what can be done with care and determination by a keen band of village performers. Sir Toby Belch was a marvel. Malvolio the best male impersonation by a woman we have seen. The Clown sang and acted with a delightful *entrain*. If we pick these characters out for special mention it is only that space forbids a more extended praise of widespread talent.

NORTH LONDON GROUP.

The North London Group have vacancies for one or two gentlemen between the ages of 18 and 30 in their forthcoming Autumn production. Further particulars from Mr. Frederic Tomlin, 40, Jackson Road, N.7.



The Greenleaf Theatre Summer School

For *AUTHOR, DIRECTOR & ACTOR*

at **Stroud, Gloucestershire**

from *July 29th to September 30th*

DIRECTORS : { *CONSTANCE SMEDLEY,*
MAXWELL ARMFIELD.

<i>Direction and Acting</i>	<i>CONSTANCE SMEDLEY</i>
<i>Programme and Production</i>	<i>CONSTANCE SMEDLEY</i>
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